

**1. Applicant's Name:** [REDACTED]**a. Application Date:** 1 February 2021**b. Date Received:** 8 February 2021**c. Counsel:** None**2. REQUEST, ISSUES, BOARD TYPE, AND DECISION:**

**a. Applicant Requests:** The current characterization of service for the period under review is general (under honorable conditions). The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable.

**b. Applicant Contention(s)/Issue(s):** The applicant requests relief contending, in effect, the applicant suffered from extreme anxiety and depression and hopes an upgrade would afford the applicant the opportunity to use veteran's benefits.

**c. Board Type and Decision:** In a records review conducted on 1 May 2025, and by a 5-0 vote, the board determined the discharge was inequitable. This determination was based on the applicant's anxiety and trauma symptoms following childbirth, as well as worsening psychological health, which affected their skills and motivation for rehabilitation. As a result, the board voted to grant relief by upgrading the characterization of service to honorable, modifying the separation authority to AR 635-200, Chapter 15, and changing the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code of JFF. Additionally, the board affirmed that the reentry eligibility (RE) code was proper and equitable, given the applicant's medical diagnoses, which warrant consideration before reentry into military service. Please see **Board Discussion and Determination** section for more detail regarding the board's decision. Board member names are available upon request.

**3. DISCHARGE DETAILS:**

**a. Reason / Authority / Codes / Characterization:** Unsatisfactory Performance / AR 635-200 / Chapter 13 / JHJ / RE-3 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**b. Date of Discharge:** 29 June 2011

**c. Separation Facts:**

**(1) Date of Notification of Intent to Separate:** 7 June 2011

**(2) Basis for Separation:** The applicant was informed of the following reasons: The applicant failed to meet the standards of Army Physical Fitness Tests (APFT) on 1 November 2010 and again on 2 February 2011.

**(3) Recommended Characterization:** General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**(4) Legal Consultation Date:** 2 June 2011

**(5) Administrative Separation Board:** NA

**(6) Separation Decision Date / Characterization:** 8 June 2011 / General (Under Honorable Conditions)

**4. SERVICE DETAILS:**

- a. **Date / Period of Enlistment:** 22 January 2008 / 4 years, 21 weeks
- b. **Date / Period of Reenlistment(s):** NA
- c. **Age at Enlistment / Education / GT Score:** 18 / GED / 99
- d. **Highest Grade Achieved / MOS / Total Service:** E-3 / 42A10, Human Resources Specialist / 4 years, 5 months, 8 days
- e. **Prior Service / Characterizations:** None
- f. **Overseas Service / Combat Service:** SWA / Bahrain (6 November 2009 – 15 March 2010)
- g. **Awards and Decorations:** AAM, NDSM, GWOTSM, SR
- h. **Performance Ratings:** NA
- i. **Disciplinary Action(s) / Evidentiary Record:**
  - (1) Company Grade Article 15, 22 October 2009, reflects the applicant failed to obey a lawful order by wrongfully driving a privately owned vehicle (POV). The punishment consisted of reduction to private/E-2; forfeiture of \$793 pay for one month and 14 days extra duty, suspended, to be automatic ally remitted if not vacated before 23 October 2009.
  - (2) Report of Behavioral Health Evaluation (BHE), 14 April 2011, reflects the applicant had the mental capacity to understand and participate in the proceeding and was mentally responsible. The applicant was diagnosed with occupational problems.
  - (3) The applicant was counseled on multiple occasions for various misconduct.
- j. **Lost Time / Mode of Return:** None
- k. **Behavioral Health Condition(s):** The following documents have been provided to the ARBA Medical Advisor, if applicable. See **“Board Discussion and Determination”** for Medical Advisor Details.
  - (1) **Applicant provided:** The applicant provides a letter from the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA), 1 February 2021, reflects the applicant was awarded a 70-percent service-connected disability rating. The nature of the disabilities is not listed.
  - (2) **AMHRR provided:**

**5. APPLICANT-PROVIDED EVIDENCE:** DD Form 293, Letter from VA

**6. POST SERVICE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:** None submitted with the application.

**7. STATUTORY, REGULATORY AND POLICY REFERENCE(S):**

- a. Section 1553, Title 10, United States Code (Review of Discharge or Dismissal) provides for the creation, composition, and scope of review conducted by a Discharge Review Board(s)

within established governing standards. As amended by Sections 521 and 525 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020, 10 USC 1553 provides specific guidance to the Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards when considering discharge upgrade requests by Veterans claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), sexual trauma, intimate partner violence (IPV), or spousal abuse, as a basis for discharge review. The amended guidance provides that Boards will include, as a voting board member, a physician trained in mental health disorders, a clinical psychologist, or a psychiatrist when the discharge upgrade claim asserts a mental health condition, including PTSD, TBI, sexual trauma, IPV, or spousal abuse, as a basis for the discharge. Further, the guidance provides that Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records and Discharge Review Boards will develop and provide specialized training specific to sexual trauma, IPV, spousal abuse, as well as the various responses of individuals to trauma.

**b.** Office, Secretary of Defense memorandum (Supplemental Guidance to Military Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Discharge Upgrade Requests by Veterans Claiming Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), 3 September 2014, directed the Service Discharge Review Boards (DRBs) and Service Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records (BCM/NRs) to carefully consider the revised PTSD criteria, detailed medical considerations and mitigating factors when taking action on applications from former service members administratively discharged UOTHC and who have been diagnosed with PTSD by a competent mental health professional representing a civilian healthcare provider in order to determine if it would be appropriate to upgrade the characterization of the applicant's service.

**c.** Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Clarifying Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Considering Requests by Veterans for Modification of their Discharge Due to Mental Health Conditions, Sexual Assault, or Sexual Harassment), 25 August 2017 issued clarifying guidance for the Secretary of Defense Directive to DRBs and BCM/NRs when considering requests by Veterans for modification of their discharges due in whole or in part to mental health conditions, including PTSD; Traumatic Brain Injury; sexual assault; or sexual harassment. Boards are to give liberal consideration to Veterans petitioning for discharge relief when the application for relief is based in whole or in part to those conditions or experiences. The guidance further describes evidence sources and criteria and requires Boards to consider the conditions or experiences presented in evidence as potential mitigation for misconduct that led to the discharge.

**d.** Office, Under Secretary of Defense memorandum (Guidance to Military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military/Naval Records Regarding Equity, Injustice, or Clemency Determinations), 25 July 2018 issued guidance to Military DRBs and BCM/NRs regarding equity, injustice, or clemency determinations. Clemency generally refers to relief specifically granted from a criminal sentence. However, the guidance applies to more than clemency from a sentencing in a court-martial; it also applies to other corrections, including changes in a discharge, which may be warranted based on equity or relief from injustice.

**(1)** This guidance does not mandate relief but rather provides standards and principles to guide Boards in application of their equitable relief authority. In determining whether to grant relief on the basis of equity, injustice, or clemency grounds, DRBs shall consider the prospect for rehabilitation, external evidence, sworn testimony, policy changes, relative severity of misconduct, mental and behavioral health conditions, official governmental acknowledgement that a relevant error or injustice was committed, and uniformity of punishment.

**(2)** Changes to the narrative reason for discharge and/or an upgraded character of service granted solely on equity, injustice, or clemency grounds normally should not result in separation pay, retroactive promotions, and payment of past medical expenses or similar

benefits that might have been received if the original discharge had been for the revised reason or had the upgraded service characterization.

**e.** Army Regulation 15-180 (Army Discharge Review Board), dated 25 September 2019, sets forth the policies and procedures under which the Army Discharge Review Board is authorized to review the character, reason, and authority of any Servicemember discharged from active military service within 15 years of the Servicemember's date of discharge. Additionally, it prescribes actions and composition of the Army Discharge Review Board under Public Law 95-126; Section 1553, Title 10 United States Code; and Department of Defense Directive 1332.41 and Instruction 1332.28.

**f.** Army Regulation 635-200 provides the basic authority for the separation of enlisted personnel.

**(1)** Chapter 3, Section II provides the authorized types of characterization of service or description of separation. It states:

**(a)** An honorable discharge is a separation with honor and is appropriate when the quality of the Soldier's service generally has met the standards of acceptable conduct and performance of duty for Army personnel or is otherwise so meritorious that any other characterization would be clearly inappropriate.

**(b)** A general discharge is a separation from the Army under honorable conditions and is issued to a Soldier whose military record is satisfactory but not sufficiently meritorious to warrant an honorable discharge.

**(2)** Chapter 13 contains the policy and outlines the procedures for separating individuals for unsatisfactory performance, and provides, in pertinent part, that commanders will separate a member under this Chapter when, in the commander's judgment, the member will not develop sufficiently to participate satisfactorily in further training and/or become a satisfactory Soldier. Army policy states that a general, under honorable conditions discharge is normally considered appropriate; however, an honorable discharge may be granted in meritorious cases. Chapter 13-2e states in pertinent part, that separation proceedings will be initiated for Soldiers without medical limitations that have two consecutive failures of the Army Physical Fitness Test. The reason for discharge will be shown as physical standards. The service of Soldiers separated because of unsatisfactory performance for failure to meet physical standards will be characterized as honorable or general (under honorable conditions).

**(3)** Chapter 15 provides explicitly for separation under the prerogative of the Secretary of the Army. Secretarial plenary separation authority is exercised sparingly and seldom delegated. Ordinarily, it is used when no other provision of this regulation applies, and early separation is clearly in the Army's best interest. Separations under this paragraph are effective only if approved in writing by the Secretary of the Army or the Secretary's approved designee as announced in updated memoranda. Secretarial separation authority is normally exercised on a case-by-case basis. If Secretarial Authority is granted normally correct the record to show the following:

- Separation Authority: Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 15
- Separation Code: JFF
- Reenlistment Code: RE1
- Narrative Reason for Separation: Secretarial Plenary Authority
- Character of Service: Honorable

(4) Army Regulation 635-5-1 (Separation Program Designator (SPD) Codes) provides the specific authorities (regulatory or directive), reasons for separating Soldiers from active duty, and the SPD codes to be entered on the DD Form 214. It identifies the SPD code of "JFT" as the appropriate code to assign enlisted Soldiers who are discharged under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 13-2e, Physical Standards.

**8. SUMMARY OF FACT(S):** Standard of Review. The Army Discharge Review Board considers applications for upgrade as instructed by Department of Defense Instruction 1332.28.

a. The applicant requests an upgrade to honorable. The applicant's Army Military Human Resources Record (AMHRR), the issues, and documents submitted with the application were carefully reviewed.

b. The applicant was separated under the provisions of Army Regulation 635-200, Chapter 13, due to Unsatisfactory Performance, with a General (Under Honorable Conditions) discharge, and RE Code of '3.' The applicant completed 5 years, 11 months, and 4 days of a combined 7-year enlistment.

c. The applicant contends the applicant suffered from extreme anxiety and depression and hopes an upgrade would afford the applicant the opportunity to use veteran's benefits. The applicant AMHRR is void of a mental health diagnosis. The applicant underwent a BHE on 14 April 2011, which reflects the applicant had the mental capacity to understand and participate in the proceeding and was mentally responsible. The applicant was diagnosed with occupational problems. The applicant provides a letter VA which reflects the applicant was awarded a 70-percent service-connected disability rating. The nature of the disabilities is not listed.

d. The applicant's separation packet reflects the basis for the applicant's separation was failing to meet the standards of APFT on two separate occasions. Chapter 13-2e states in pertinent part, that separation proceedings will be initiated for Soldiers without medical limitations that have two consecutive failures of APFT. The reason for discharge will be shown as physical standards. The service of Soldiers separated because of unsatisfactory performance for failure to meet physical standards will be characterized as honorable or general (under honorable conditions).

## **9. BOARD DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION:**

a. As directed by the 2017 memo signed by A.M. Kurta, the board considered the following factors:

(1) Did the applicant have a condition or experience that may excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor, a voting member, reviewed the applicant's DOD and VA health records, applicant's statement, and/or civilian provider documentation and found that the applicant has the following potentially mitigating diagnoses: Adjustment Disorder, GAD, MDD.

(2) Did the condition exist, or experience occur during military service? **Yes.** Adjustment Disorder with trauma symptoms.

(3) Does the condition or experience actually excuse or mitigate the discharge? **Yes.** The Board's Medical Advisor applied liberal consideration and opined that documentation outlines anxiety and trauma symptoms after the birth of her son with resulting health issues for both her son and her. Given the significant medical needs of her son and she, of which her health has been determined to have been largely ignored in-service, related logistical

challenges for which she appears to have been held to a higher standard than her AD husband and worsening psychological health impacting skills and motivation allowing for rehabilitation, an upgrade is appropriate.

**(4)** Does the condition or experience outweigh the discharge? **Yes.** After applying liberal consideration to the evidence, including the Board Medical Advisor opine, the board determined that the applicant's Adjustment Disorder with trauma symptoms outweighed the applicant's Unsatisfactory Performance (failure to meet the standards of Army Physical Fitness Tests).

**b.** Prior Decisions Cited: NA – Applies to Personal Appearances only.

**c.** Response to Contention(s): The applicant contends the applicant suffered from extreme anxiety and depression and hopes an upgrade would afford the applicant the opportunity to use veteran's benefits.

The board considered this contention during proceedings, but ultimately did not address the contention due to an upgrade being granted based on the applicant's Adjustment Disorder with trauma symptoms that mitigated the applicant's Unsatisfactory Performance (failure to meet the standards of Army Physical Fitness Tests).

**d.** The board determined the discharge is inequitable based on the applicant's anxiety and trauma symptoms after childbirth and worsening psychological health impacting skills and motivation allowing for rehabilitation. Therefore, the board voted to grant relief in the form of an upgrade of the characterization of service to honorable, changed the separation authority to AR 635-200, Chapter 15, and the narrative reason for separation to Secretarial Authority, with a corresponding separation code to JFF. The board voted and determined the reentry eligibility (RE) code was proper and equitable due to the applicant's medical diagnoses warranting consideration prior to reentry of military service. However, the applicant may request a personal appearance hearing to address further issues before the board.

**e.** Rationale for Decision:

**(1)** Published Department of Defense guidance indicates the guidance is not intended to interfere or impede on the board's statutory independence. The board determines the relative weight of the action that was the basis for the discharge and whether it supports relief or not. In reaching its determination, the board considers the applicant's petition, available records and any supporting documents included with the petition.

**(2)** The board voted to change the applicant's characterization of service to Honorable because, the board believed the characterization was too harsh for the minor misconduct and the applicant was experiencing anxiety and trauma after childbirth that impacted her psychological health and rehabilitation efforts. Additionally, the applicant's diagnosis of Adjustment Disorder with trauma symptoms mitigated the applicant's basis of separation - Unsatisfactory Performance (ACFT Failure).

**(3)** The board voted to change the reason for discharge to Secretarial Authority under the same rationale, thus the reason for discharge is no longer appropriate. The SPD code associated with the new reason for discharge is JFF.

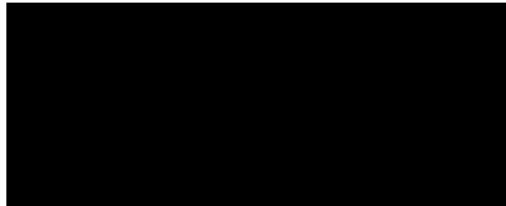
**(4)** The RE code will not change. The Board determined the RE code was proper and equitable due to the applicant's medical diagnosis which warrants consideration prior to reentry of military service.

**10. BOARD ACTION DIRECTED:**

- a. **Issue a New DD-214:** Yes
- b. **Change Characterization to:** Honorable
- c. **Change Reason / SPD code to:** Secretarial Authority / JFF
- d. **Change RE Code to:** No Change
- e. **Change Authority to:** AR 635-200, Chapter 15

**Authenticating Official:**

5/17/2025



**Legend:**

AWOL – Absent Without Leave  
 AMHRR – Army Military Human  
 Resource Record  
 BCD – Bad Conduct Discharge  
 BH – Behavioral Health  
 CG – Company Grade Article 15  
 CID – Criminal Investigation  
 Division  
 ELS – Entry Level Status  
 FG – Field Grade Article 15  
 FTR – Failure to Report

GD – General Discharge  
 HS – High School  
 HD – Honorable Discharge  
 IADT – Initial Active-Duty  
 Training  
 MP – Military Police  
 MST – Military Sexual Trauma  
 N/A – Not applicable  
 NCO – Noncommissioned Officer  
 NIF – Not in File  
 NOS – Not Otherwise Specified

OAD – Ordered to Active Duty  
 OBH (I) – Other Behavioral  
 Health (Issues)  
 OMPF – Official Military  
 Personnel File  
 PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress  
 Disorder  
 RE – Re-entry  
 SCM – Summary Court Martial  
 SPCM – Special Court Martial

SPD – Separation Program  
 Designator  
 TBI – Traumatic Brain Injury  
 UNC – Uncharacterized  
 Discharge  
 UOTHC – Under Other Than  
 Honorable Conditions  
 VA – Department of Veterans  
 Affairs